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Book Review

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Book Review

Erratum

The citation for this review is 4 *RISK* 263 (1993) in most commercial databases.

ROBERT A. SHANLEY, PRESIDENTIAL INFLUENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY. (Greenwood Press, 1992) [163 pp.] Abbreviations, acknowledgements, index, introduction, notes, selected bibliography. LC 92-15584; ISBN 0-313-25883-X. [\$45.00 cloth. 88 Post Road West; Westport CT 06881.]

Shanley, a professor of political science, focuses primarily on environmental law but broadly overviews implementation of regulatory policy and presidential influence. His introduction provides a helpful, concise summary of each chapter and states that a main purposes of the book "...is to extend the analysis of the Reagan administrative presidency strategy and its impact on environmentally related policies throughout the Reagan years and to examine its legacy for the Bush Administration."¹ Although Shanley did not seem to anticipate the results of the last election, his topic is of continuing concern.

Chapter 1 historically overviews Presidential influence on administrative law, beginning with Theodore Roosevelt. It also compares "administrative presidency strategy" of the Carter and Reagan administrations. Chapter 2 takes a closer look at ways the Reagan administration attempted to curb agencies' issuance of new regulations through use of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs — as well as through appointments, reorganizations and budget restrictions.

In the third chapter, Shanley examines the significant influence of executive orders on environmental policy, beginning in 1970. Reagan orders E.O. 12291 and 12498 are flagged as laying important foundations for subsequent regulatory strategy. Chapter 4 contrasts the Carter and Reagan Administrations, with particular attention to the increased role of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in risk assessment under Reagan, including both criticism and a view that "OMB has a legitimate role to play... reflecting the political concerns and priorities of an administration."² In the following chapter, Shanley examines Reagan's influence on the EPA under the infamous reign of

¹ At 2.

² At 91.

Ann Burford and the subsequent restoration of credibility by William Ruckelshaus.

Next, Shanley details the reactions of Congress and the courts and the effects it had on Bush — who had served as “Reagan’s loyal lieutenant and chairman of the President’s Task Force on Regulatory Relief.”³ He also discusses the continuing role of the OMB and the increased role of Bush’s Council on Competitiveness (Council) and illustrates “...the Administration’s difficulties in working out compromises between environmental and economic interests.”⁴

Ultimately, Shanley concludes that:⁵

[T]he record of presidential leadership since earth Day in 1970 has been uneven... reactive, often to crises, and shaped by a political economy whose leading measurements of economic growth do not fully account for environmental and natural resources losses.

Unfortunately, limits on political incentives of the president as administrative and legislative leader in environmental policy render such leadership problematic and uncertain for the major challenges the nation faces in the foreseeable future.

Anyone working with executive agencies or anyone who is merely interested in how the power of the president is actually exercised will find this overview of considerable interest.

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³ At 131.

⁴ At 6.

⁵ At 162–3.

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